

DOAS Loss Control Bulletin

November 2012

Topic of the Month... Ergonomics


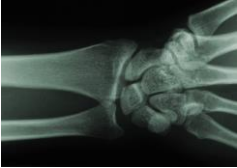


What is “Ergonomics”? *Ergonomics is fitting the task to the person.* Employees perform job tasks that expose them to potential injuries and illnesses due to the poor design of a workstation or tools they are using; or due to bad habits workers have developed. Ergonomics involves the assessment of job tasks to identify risk factors and the implementation of engineering or administrative controls to address the hazards.

What are Ergonomic Risk Factors? Ergonomic risk factors are characteristics of a job that contribute to the creation of various strains and stresses on the body. When a person has a higher level of stress or exposure to a hazard, the greater the chance of an injury or illness.

The big four ergonomic risk factors are: **Force, Duration, Repetition, and Body Position.**

Other potential ergonomic risk factors include: **Vibration, Contact Stress, Sustained Exertions, and Cold Temperatures.**

Prevention of Ergonomic Injuries at Workstations:

Areas to review	Possible preventive strategies
Repetition 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Alternate tasks • Share tasks with coworkers • Take frequent breaks from keying/or using mouse • Reduce or eliminate unnecessary work
Awkward Posture/Position 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Sit supported against the back of your chair • Avoid bending or twisting your neck or trunk • Keep shoulders relaxed and arms close by sides when working • Keep elbows at approximately 90 degrees when using keyboard and mouse • Keep wrists in a straight or neutral position when keying or using the mouse • Keep fingers in a relaxed position when keying or using the mouse • Keep work materials within close reach • Use a telephone headset for frequent/prolonged phone use • Change positions/tasks frequently
Force/Pressure 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Key with a light touch • Avoid prolonged or excessive grasping of the mouse • Use larger diameter pens to reduce grip when writing • Use electric stapler for large stapling jobs • Select a chair with adequate padding • Avoid resting elbows and wrists on sharp or hard edges and surfaces
Eye Strain 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Reduce glare on your computer screen by adjusting its placement and tilt, using a glare guard or using window blinds and light filters • “Rest” eyes every 15 minutes by focusing on more distant objects • Take visual breaks from the screen • Blink often when viewing the monitor • Wear appropriate corrective lens for computer work • Adjust the font or brightness and contrast of the screen • Use available Zoom/View functions within applications

If you need further assistance, please contact us for discussion or a site visit or training session. A short evaluation goes a long way to **Prevent** injuries. Ignoring the issue will not make the problems go away. Nationally one-third of workplace injuries involve ergonomics. If it hurts you may need to change something at your workstation. As you can see from the table above, small inexpensive changes can make a big difference.

Thanks for your time. Let’s work together to make Georgia a safer place to work.

DOAS Risk Management Services Division Loss Control Office
Contact us by email: losscontrol@doas.ga.gov or call (404) 656-6245 for additional information.